(b) whether the Amnesty has also alleged that torture women of lower castes and untouchables, who have special rights under the laws to protect them, are not protected and grievances not attended to by the police; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The draft Report prepared by the Amnesty International received from the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs has been sent by the Government to the concerned State Governments.

Preservation of mineral bearing areas

4382. SHRI R.S. GAVAI : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether issue of dereservation of mineral bearing areas which the State Governments have reserved for exploitation by public sector has been discussed during recently convened meeting of the Ministers of Mining and Geology;

(b) if so, the outcome of the meeting;

(c) whether representations have been received from State Governments for revision of royalty rates of some minerals;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI JAISINGRAO GAIKWAD PATIL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Conference of State Ministers of Mining and Geology held on 14-7-2001 discussed the status of review of unexploited areas reserved for public sector exploitation. It was decided that the States would review the areas reserved under the erstwhile Rule 58 of Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 and denotify areas not required for exclusive exploitation through Public Sector Undertakings. In case of remaining areas, State Governments would send full justification area wise for continuing with reservation to the Central Government within six months.

(c) to (e) Representations are received from time to time from various State Governments regarding revision of royalty rates of minerals. Under the

provisions of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, rates of royalty on minerals can be enhanced not more than once in a period of three years. The Central Government (Ministry of Mines) had recently revised the rates of royalty of major minerals (other than coal, lignite and sand for stowing) vide notification dated 12-9-2000. Ministry of Coal has revised the rates of royalty on lignite vide notification dated 15-3-2001, and has set up a Committee on 27-7-2000 under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary (Coal) to make recommendations on the structure of rates of roalty on Coal, which were last revised on 11-10-94.

Collection of Marine Temperature

4383. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the International Argo Implementation Planning Group has embarked upon a global programme to facilitate collection of information relating to marine temperature and level of salinity;

(b) if so, the details of the programme;

(c) whether the country is a party to this global programme; and

(d) if so, extent of India's participation therein and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) :(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Array of Real-Time Geotrophic Oceanography (ARGO) is an international programme endorsed by the World Meteorological Organisation and the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commssion. ARGO programme envisages a global array of more than 3000 freely drifting floats which will provide temperature and salinity profiles of the upper layers of the ocean upto a depth of 2000 m., in cycles of 10-15 days in near real time Argo floats provide an opportunity for sustained ocean observation. Data from these floats can be used to enhance the understanding of the ocean circulation and in medium to long term climate forecast.

(c) and (d) India is participating in the ARGO programme and proposes to deploy 150 ARGO floats in the Indian Ocean during next 4 years.